This number contains one of the $2,600 Prize Stories.

The Black Cat

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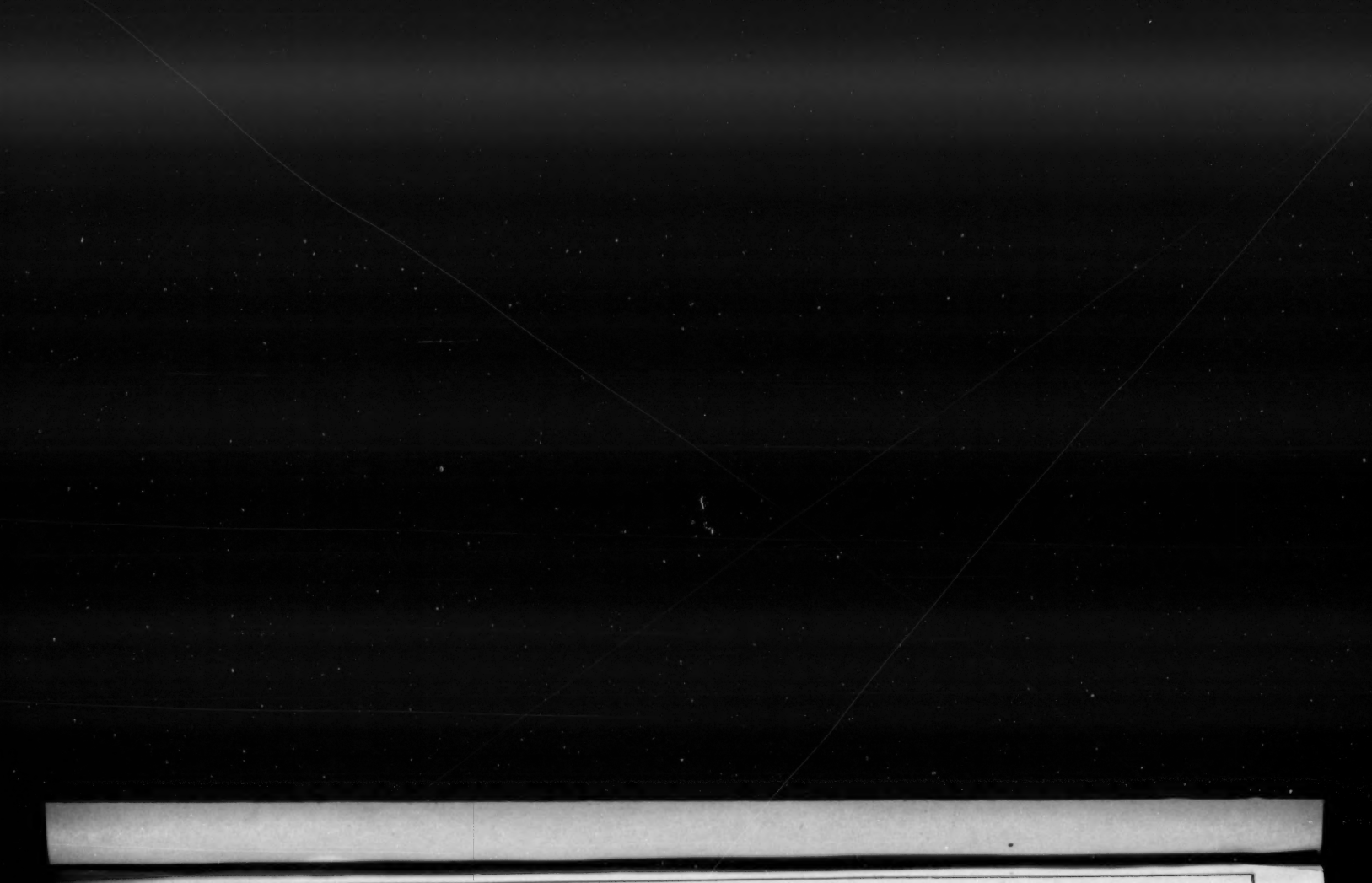

The Black Cat

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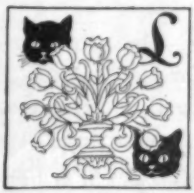
Sombre.*

BY JOHN M. ELLICOTT, U. S. N.



LONG golden beams from the setting sun swept over the plains of Andalusia, along the serpentine line of green willows which marks the course of the Rio Guadalquivir, and fell upon the Giralda Tower of the great cathedral of Sevilla, many miles in the background. In their path along the banks of the limpid river, those beams illumined a stretch of vast pastures, enclosed by whitened stone walls, and dotted with magnificent cattle. Finally, in a far corner of one of these enclosures, they sought out the figure of a young girl passing through an arched stone gateway. As she turned from closing the gate, she threw back from her head and shoulders a dark lace *mantilla*, and paused to gaze upon the scattered groups of grazing beasts, the level rays, meanwhile, playing in lights and shadows upon the waving masses of dark chestnut hair, upon the richly health-tinted young face and the creamy neck, and penetrating deeply into the large, dark eyes. That their touch was not new to her, her olive-tanned skin bore witness, but never had they discovered such signs of distress in the lus-

* Pronounced Sombray. This story received a fifth prize, of $100, in THE BLACK CAT prize competition, which closed March 31, 1897.

trous eyes, underscored darkly with emotional fatigue, and painfully dry, as if tears were exhausted.

She gazed but a moment from group to group, then took several quick steps toward a near one, crying out eagerly in tones which Juliet might have used to Romeo : —

" Sombre ! Sombre ! "

A pair of long, gleaming horns rose abruptly amid the browsing herd, and a magnificent bull came toward the young girl at a brisk trot. The sunbeams glinted upon his intensely dark coat as it swelled and sank under the play of powerful muscles. His neck and shoulders were leonine in their massive strength, his legs and hind quarters as sleek and symmetrical as those of a racehorse, but his ferociousness was for the moment held in check by that devoted love which, in their actions and expression, dumb animals show for those who love them.

In a moment the young girl's white arms were thrown around the animal's dusky neck as far as they would go, and her cheek was laid upon the silken skin.

" O Sombre," she murmured, " do you know what they are going to do ? Papa wants to send you to the *Plaza de Toros !* I have begged him in vain to spare you, but he is a heartless papa. Does he think, after Anita has brought you up from a tiny little black calf to be such a beautiful *toro*, such a dear, good *toro*, that she can give you to those cruel *picadores*, those maddening *capeadores*, and the heartless *matador*, to be tortured, and made crazy, and killed for the amusement of brutal men and women ? "

She was sobbing bitterly, and the devoted beast was striving vainly to turn his head far enough to lick the fair neck bending down upon his. Then the sobbing ceased, and she stroked the strong shoulders with her small hand.

" Never fear, Sombre," she said, " if they take you to Sevilla, Anita will find a way to save you. Now let me wipe your mouth so that you may say good night."

With her delicate handkerchief, she wiped the grass and earth stains from the big beast's mouth, then held out her hand. In deepest dumb brute devotion he thrust out his huge tongue and licked the little hand and arm. Then she bent forward and kissed him on the frowning, hairy forehead between his eyes, and de-

parted, waving a last farewell with the handkerchief as she passed out through the gateway.

Anita's path homeward lay through another field, which, when she had crossed it earlier, had been empty, but now a herd of cattle was moving through it in a restless, zigzag way which showed that it was being driven. Always fearless in the presence of cattle, Anita scarcely heeded the approach of this disgruntled herd, but hurried along, holding her skirts up from time to time as she crossed damp places. In doing so she displayed not only a pair of well-booted little feet, but part of an elaborately embroidered, red silk underskirt. Suddenly she heard a low bellow of animal rage, and a rapid, heavy beating of hoofs on the soft turf; in one fearful backward glance she saw a great brindle bull thundering toward her, with horns close to the ground: then fear paralyzed her, and she tottered and fell forward, burying her face in her hands, and moaning an incoherent prayer.

Far across the field a young herdsman, in broad *sombrero* and short jacket, riding a strong horse hither and thither in brisk canters to round up straggling cattle in rear of the herd, had seen the girl enter from the adjoining pasture, and had instantly realized her danger. Even before the maddened bull had charged upon his intended victim, the horseman, with an agonized exclamation in English, had given his steed rein and was riding at breakneck speed along the flank of the advancing herd to throw himself between it and Anita. When the angry bull broke from the rest with his murderous intent, the horseman set his beardless lips hard upon one another and lifted from the pommel of his saddle the coils of a long lariat. The next moment, with a wild plunge between the infuriated bull,— a plunge before which the mass of moving forms swerved away in a tumbling, jostling mass, like baffled billows beaten back from a cliff,— the young man rode on till nearly abreast of the mad animal. There was a quick sweep of the hand containing the coiled lariat, a straightening out of the coils as they swished through the air, until a single remaining loop seemed to float for a moment like a halo above the charging beast's head, then fell around the spreading horns. Instantly the lariat tightened, the intelligent horse fell back almost upon his haunches, sliding many yards through

the soft turf, the huge bull's lowered head swung abruptly under his left forefoot, his long horns plowed deeply into the ground, and his body rolled onward in a sidewise somersault, and flung itself out at full length, perfectly limp. So close was the beast to his intended victim that clods of earth from his hoofs fell upon her dress.

The young man sprang from his horse, and lifted the almost fainting girl in his arms, exclaiming in Spanish and with unmistakable terms of endearment: —

"Anita, are you hurt?"

She clung to him as a castaway would to a suddenly discovered spar, trembled violently from head to foot, then slid to the ground, unconscious. Dropping down beside her, he raised her to a reclining position in his arms, tore away the *mantilla* from her head and shoulders, and fanned her with his big, flexible *sombrero*. Meanwhile his horse, having inspected and snorted over the fallen bull, came forward and sniffed at the group in sympathy.

Anita drew a long, convulsive breath and opened her eyes. Faintly smiling up into her rescuer's face, she murmured some hardly audible words of tender greeting, from which she broke off to struggle abruptly to her feet, crying in apprehension: —

"Where is he?"

"There; dead and harmless."

"Are you sure? How did you kill him?"

"I broke his neck — one of my cowboy tricks learned on the plains at home. Don Alonzo will be furious, for it was El Sol, and he was advertised for the *Plaza de Toros* next Sunday."

Anita clasped her hands and asked, with bated breath, for her heart seemed to cease beating: —

"And was — was Sombre advertised, too?"

"Yes; haven't you seen the posters? There is one on the outer gateway; but here, I have one in my pocket."

He drew from an inside pocket of his short jacket a bright-red sheet covered with black letters, and held it up before her. Pressing one hand to her throat, and leaning eagerly forward, Anita read, with burning eyes, the words that stamped upon her mind as a dreadful certainty what had existed there before only as a vague dread.

No, there was no mistaking the import of those terse, abbreviated Spanish sentences.

PLAZA DE TOROS DE SEVILLA,

SUNDAY, THE SEVENTEENTH OF MAY,

ANNIVERSARY OF THE KING'S BIRTHDAY,

SIX BULLS TO BE KILLED.

The two magnificent brother bulls SOL and SOMBRE,
and others very ferocious,

AGAINST

THE INTREPID MATADORES

LARIATO, THE AMERICAN,

AND

AMADOR OF SEVILLA.

As her eager eyes flashed down the sheet, the blood rushed to her forehead, her hands clenched and unclenched.

"It is cruel of them, cruel," she murmured; then, with a little gasp: —

"Ah! 'Lariato' — that is yourself. Listen," — entreatingly, — "you will spare him; you will spare my Sombre!"

"They do not permit me to fight Don Alonzo's bulls," Orlando replied, "for I raise them, and they would not fight me. Amador will fight Sombre."

"No, no!" the young girl cried, with tense voice, her hand gripping his arm, "you *must* fight Sombre. That wicked Amador will kill him!"

"But so would I, Anita, or be killed by him."

Anita was silent for a time, thinking fast. Suddenly she exclaimed: —

"Orlando, do you love me enough to put faith in a promise which will seem to you impossible of fulfilment?"

He took her in his arms impulsively. "God knows I do!"

"Don't — don't!" she said, gently pulling away; "but listen; I refused to be engaged to you until you were reconciled to those parents in New York from whom you ran away so foolishly — "

"Who drove me out from wealth and luxury without cause!"

"Hush!" she said, "don't interrupt me. I take back that condition, and make one which will involve not your pride, but your faith in me. If Sombre goes to the *Plaza de Toros*, *you* must fight him, and must spare him, even if they hiss and jeer at you."

Orlando grew very white.

"I cannot bear their jeers," he said; "death is easier! Perhaps the manager will let me fight Sombre, for you raised him, and I can tell them that I have scarcely seen him. I will fight him, Anita, and for your sake I will let him kill me!"

"No, Orlando, for this is my promise: even in the last extremity, *Sombre shall not harm you!*"

"And then, Anita?"

"Then I will leave my father's house and go to you. Don Alonzo will never forgive, and I shall become an outcast like yourself. We will buy Sombre with my money, and have enough left to take us to your dear America. We will go to those plains you love so to tell about; you will become a *ranchero*, and Sombre will be the patriarch of our herds."

The man shook his head. "You do not understand," he said gloomily. "I have tried that once, and failed!"

"Ah," she said, gaily, "but you had neither Sombre nor Anita," and waving him a kiss, she ran off across the field, that portion of it being now free from cattle.

. . . . . .

On Sunday afternoon, May 17, 189–, a small party of American sightseers left the Gran Hotel de Madrid in Sevilla, drove to the *Plaza de Toros*, and occupied a stall specially reserved for them. They evidently constituted a fraction of New York's "Four Hundred," although the chaperon, an austere, aristocratic-looking woman, had unmistakably Castilian features. She was dressed with the elegance and simplicity of wealth and good breeding, and had a nervous habit of raising a lorgnette to her peculiarly careworn eyes whenever a stranger passed her, as if always hoping to

see some one whom she had long sought. The gentlemen of the party wore the uniform of the New York Yacht Club. In fact, a handsome steam yacht had left these people at Malaga, and was now awaiting them at Cadiz.

The party reached the *Plaza* late. Amador de Sevilla had killed several bulls, and now there was a short intermission, during which elegant Spanish *caballeros* were making courtly bows among their neighbors, and handsome, bespangled boys were hastening around the serried tiers of humanity selling *dulces** and soft drinks. In the vast arena itself the *capeadores* had thrown their red mantles carelessly upon the encircling board fence, and were smoothing the earth here and there where it had been torn up in deadly combat. There was a vast murmur from thousands of throats, like the magnified hum of bees among apple blossoms.

In a stall of the lowest tier, close beside an *entrada* which led like a corrugated toboggan slide down through the terraces of seats to a masked exit from the ring (used by *capeadores* to escape when hard pressed by a bull), sat Anita alone, for Don Alonzo, her father, had gone quite half way around the *plaza* and was hanging over the chair of a handsome matron, probably paying her exaggerated Castilian compliments.

Presently a band of music began a stately march, and under a high stone archway, at the far side of the ring, a long procession advanced. First, gaudily caparisoned *picadores* on blindfolded steeds debouched two by two, separated, and circled in opposite directions until they came to a halt facing the center, with long lances at rest. Then red-coated *torreadores*, carrying long barbs with brilliant streamers of ribbon, grouped themselves near the heavy, closed doors of the bull pen. Finally, the *capeadores*, in yellow satin, carrying the flaming red capes on their arms, filed around like the mounted *picadores* and stood between their steeds.

The music ceased, the vast murmur of voices died away, and the gates of the bull pen were thrown open. At a quick trot a great black bull dashed in, receiving in his shoulders, as he passed the *torreadores*, two short barbs crowned with big rosettes of colored ribbons.

Anita gripped her chair and gasped: —

* Sweetmeats.

"Sombre!"

Coming from a darkened pen, Sombre had trotted eagerly forward, expecting to find himself once more in his loved pastures, but he paused bewildered in the great glare of light. What meant those tiers of people, which seemed to reach the sky? What meant those horsemen facing him with spears in such a sinister manner? What meant those stinging pains in his shoulders? Sombre stood in the middle of the ring with head raised high and tail slowly lashing his flanks. Hither and thither he turned with nervous abruptness, and stood at gaze. Finally, he lowered his grand head and sniffed the earth, and there he smelled fresh, warm blood, the blood of his own kind! In an instant Sombre realized that he was to be the victim of some dreadful tragedy prepared by human hands. With gathering rage he lowered his keen horns close to the ground, gave a deep, hoarse bellow of defiance and flung clod after clod with his forefeet high above his back. Then there flaunted toward him a red object, at which he charged, but it swept aside, and a new sting of pain was felt in his neck. Something with long, bright streamers was hanging there and swinging about, gouging and tearing in his flesh as it swung, and warm blood was trickling down his neck. Again and again he charged, but each time the red things vanished and there was more pain; more torturing barbs hung in his neck and maddened him.

Presently a horseman advanced with lowered spear. Surely horse and rider could not vanish. Ah, no! Sombre found that it was not intended that they should. Rushing upon them, he struck such a blow that they were forced backwards twenty feet, and both gave a scream of pain. The *picador* was dragged away with a broken leg despite his sheet-iron leggings, and the horse, when beaten to make it rise, lay lifeless, for Sombre's horn had pierced its heart. Instantly a great cry went up from that vast crater of humanity.

"Bravo! — Bravo, Toro! — Bravo, Sombre!"

Sombre understood that he was applauded, and trotted around the ring looking up at his admirers. Perhaps, after all, he was expected to do the killing and not be killed; but why torture him with the maddening barbs?

More than once he earned that grand applause, then his tor-

mentors disappeared, and he stood alone looking at the archway through which they had departed, and longing to go, too.

And now through that archway there advanced a young man, tall and athletic, in green spangled jacket and knee breeches; in ruffled shirt, flesh-colored stockings, and buckled shoes. On his left arm hung a scarlet mantle, and in his right hand he carried a long, keen sword. Unlike other *matadors*, he wore no wig, but his own hair curled in soft brown waves above a pale, classic, beardless face.

Up in her stall, the chaperon of the yachting party nervously raised her lorgnette, then turned pale and half arose from her seat, but sank back again, murmuring under her breath: —

"Impossible! I am foolish, but it looks like him!"

She could have spoken the words aloud without being heard, for the whole audience was yelling like mad: —

"*Lariato! Lariato el Americano!!*"

Pausing under the archway, the *matador* swept his sword in military salute, bowing low his handsome head. Then, with lowered sword point, he stepped into the arena and faced his antagonist. Upon all fell an awful silence, for Lariato and Sombre were met in a struggle to the death!

The man and bull were alone in the ring. Orlando would never permit a human being to be within helping distance during his encounters. For a time the combatants stood motionless, eyeing each other intently. Then came stealthy movements hither and thither, then thundering, desperate charges and graceful, hairbreadth escapes. At last, in one great charge, Sombre's horns tore the scarlet mantle from Lariato's arm, and, carrying it half around the ring as a streaming red banner, the bull ground and trampled it in the dirt. A slight hissing was noticeable in the vast audience, which turned to thundering applause when Lariato contemptuously refused a new mantle brought by a *capeador*. The man alone was now the mad beast's target, but Lariato had at last reached the position of advantage for which he had so long maneuvered. He was standing in the midst of the great lune of shadow cast by the encircling wall, while Sombre, across the ring, was in the glaring sunlight. The audience understood the situation, and became breathless.

Sombre, dripping with blood and perspiration, his flanks swelling and falling in his great gasps for breath, his eyes half blinded by the dust and glare, slowly realized that he was wasting his effort upon a mere textile fabric, while his real antagonist stood tauntingly before him. Throwing up his head, he gave the *matador* one brief glance, as if to measure his distance, then, with head low down, he charged upon him. Lariato's long, keen blade was lowered confidently to its death-dealing slant. The whole audience arose *en masse* and craned forward.

Just as the murderous sword point seemed about to sink through the bull's shoulders into his very heart, a despairing woman's cry, unheeded by the onlookers, reached the *matador's* ears.

Then a mighty hiss, like the whistling of a great wind, interspersed with hoots and jeers, went up from the exasperated spectators, for the bull thundered on, with the sword, scarcely penetrating an inch into the tough muscles, standing upright between his shoulders and swaying from side to side, while Lariato, with a quick step aside, stood disarmed.

Coming to a standstill far beyond his antagonist, Sombre shook his vast body, and the sword spun high into the air and fell toward the center of the ring. Lariato took several steps toward it, tottered, and fell forward prone upon the ground in a swoon, for he had been grievously bruised. With a great exultant roar, the bull rushed back to complete its victory. The hissing and hooting was hushed, and groans of horror swelled through the air.

Suddenly, just as the animal had gathered full headway in his murderous charge, a slight, white-gowned figure glided through the *capeadores'* exit into the ring, and a clear, ringing voice pronounced one word: —

"Sombre!"

At the sound of that voice the charging beast came strainingly to a halt, threw up its head and gazed eagerly about. Then there went up another cry of horror, as he turned and rushed toward the girl. *Capeadores* hurried forward, flaunting their red *capas*, but she waved them back.

"Go back!" she cried, "you shall torment him no more, my poor, tortured, wounded Sombre!"

In a moment the great beast was beside her, and making unmistakable demonstrations of joy; licking her dress, and arms, and hands. As she deftly extricated the barbs from his neck and shoulders, the thousands of throats around them shrieked out a vast pandemonium of *bravos*. Blood was covering her hands and soiling her dress, but Anita was blind to it.

Meanwhile Lariato, after a dash of water in his face, had struggled to his feet and hurried toward her.

"God bless you," he was saying, but she pushed past him with a glad smile, murmuring: —

"Wait; I have something to say to them."

Standing at the center of the ring with one hand uplifted, Anita waited for silence. Quickly the audience understood that mute, graceful appeal. Delaying till not a sound was heard, Anita said, in such clear tones that they reached every ear: —

"Jeer not at Lariato. He spared my pet, my Sombre, because he loved me."

No *matador* ever gained such applause as followed. *Bravo, Lariato! Bravo, la senorita de toros; Bravo, Sombre! Bravo, bravissimo!* rang out and reechoed over distant housetops. Bouquets, *sombreros*, scarfs, and full purses showered into the ring.

And as that strange group stood facing the ovation, the chaperon of the yachting party tremblingly seized a pair of opera glasses and scrutinized the *matador's* colorless upturned face. Then she sank back, exclaiming: —

"God be thanked! I have found him!"

. . . . . .

Three additional passengers joined the yacht at Cadiz. Two of them may now be found in a Fifth Avenue mansion in New York City, and the third may be seen every autumn at the Westchester County Fair.

The Debut of Mandana.

BY ALDEN LYMAN.

T exactly half past seven one lovely morning in May the bell of the Methodist Church in Brookdale began to toll. Mandana Shepardson, hearing it, paused in her housework and sat down by the open window. While waiting for the striking of the age, which would follow the tolling, she leaned her head on her hand and fell into a reverie.

Meditation was a comparatively new sensation to Mandana. In fact, just now life was offering her many new sensations, for her ship — that frail fairy bark that so seldom makes a successful voyage on Fortune's sea — had arrived at port; and for six months this woman had been cultivating the sweet acquaintance of life and liberty.

At twenty-three, Mandana Shepardson had been left a widow, and for nearly thirty years life had meant to her merely the condition of body which makes it possible for one to work. Nearly every day of those years she spent in "the factory," working hard and faithfully from seven in the morning till six at night. There was a pitiful monotony about it. Few pleasures had come to her; and thirty years is a long time.

But now all was changed. A distant relative, whose existence Mandana had forgotten, died one day, leaving her all his money. It was not much, but it was enough to support her for the rest of her life. At first she refused to believe in her good fortune; she had not realized that anything could happen to her. Afterwards she gave herself up with great zest to the pleasures of her new condition. Certain innocent but ardent desires that had accumulated during the past she was now able to satisfy, and her delight in the process, as well as in the results, was pathetic. It mattered not to her that many of the articles of personal adornment so long desired and now obtained were anywhere from ten

to twenty years old in style, and proportionably unsuited to her age; she had longed for them, she now possessed them — that was enough. She took a fierce delight in being extravagant. At times she would buy large quantities of perishable fruits and vegetables, and view the spoiling of the unused surplus with a serene and superior air, and she actually purchased two copies of a rather costly engraving of a picture that had charmed the romantic fancy of her young womanhood years before, and hung them side by side in her little parlor.

It had been some time before she realized that she was not entirely happy — that even in her new life of wealth and leisure there was something wanting. When her grievance defined itself she suffered keenly. Briefly, it was this: people didn't run in! To "run in," in Brookdale parlance, meant to make an informal call. If you entered a friend's house without knocking, and by the back door, great was the compliment to your hostess. If, when you left, you insisted on going out by the same back door, in spite of urgent invitations to "Come the front way; you can just as well as not," you reached the height of politeness.

Mandana had hosts of friends; but a woman who was away from home all day and every day could not be expected either to dispense or to accept hospitalities to any great extent; and people had become so accustomed to keeping up her acquaintance by meeting her on the street, at church, at the stores, or the post-office (indeed, many people had never seen her anywhere else), that they seldom thought of her as having a home at all. In the past Mandana had accepted this state of affairs as unavoidable, but now — now that she had retired to domestic life, all her secret social longings as well as her ideas of "what was what" awakened within her, and she knew that she ought to mingle with her kind, or rather, that her kind ought to mingle with her. It was in vain, however, that she extended prim little invitations to call to everybody she met. All said they "would be happy to," but found it hard to take her seriously. Visit Mandana Shepardson? Why, they would as soon have thought of visiting a bird or a butterfly!

So the days crept by, uncheered by any neighborly intimacies, until at times the lonely woman almost longed for her chains.

The church bell struck six. Mandana still sat at the window

thinking vaguely of life and death. A bit of a breeze blew in laden with the scent of lilacs. A lilac by the name of "laylock," which was what she called it, smelled just as sweet to Mandana. The leaves moved musically. An oriole in a neighboring elm blew bubbles of delicious melody. Mandana could see him — a speck of orange against the dark green of the tree, and the blue of the sky beyond. She thought it beat all how many things there were to see and hear when a body had time.

Suddenly the watcher at the window started bolt upright. A woman was coming down the street. Mandana saw her and was alert in a moment. Could it be a caller for her? She would not trust fate; she would help fate along. She went to the door, stepped out into the walk, and pretended to busy herself with the pansies that grew on either side.

"Good morning, Mis' Pond."

"Why, how do you do Mi' Shepardson! I declare it don't seem natural to see you here t' home in the daytime."

"It seems real good, though, to me," said Mandana, smiling brightly. "Won't you come in?"

"I sh'think 'twould," said Mrs. Pond, leaning against the fence sociably, but taking no notice of the invitation. "Wa'n't you in luck, though, Mi' Shepardson! I was awful glad for you, and so's everybody else, I guess, by the way they talk. I kep' a-thinking I sh' see you somewheres — I wanted to give you my con-grat-u-la-tions (pronouncing the unaccustomed word somewhat awkwardly). But I s'pose you don't go out so much now that you don't haf to, and that's why I hain't seen you anywhere."

"Er — why haven't you run down to see me?" queried Mandana, trying to speak naturally. Mrs. Pond stared a little. She had never been inside Mandana's house, though they had known each other for twenty years.

"Oh, wal," she replied pleasantly, "you know I never go anywhere, Mi' Shepardson. I'm a dretful homebody, 'n' I have so much to do with my housework 'n' the children. But I will come sometime. I sh' like to real well. And you must come up *there*. Run in any time." And she was off before Mandana could say more.

Mandana rose, and drew a long breath. "There!" she said. "It's the last time I'll do that! I don't care — I know how

things ought to be, and them that's friends to me ought to come and see me first. And I can't coax 'em, and I won't!"

When the grocery man came — the fact that she was now able, like other folks, to have him come to the house was a source of innocent enjoyment to Mandana — she learned from that dispenser of news and groceries that the bell had tolled for little Milly Latimer,— a sweet child, whom she often used to see on her way to the mill. With her honest feeling of sorrow came a little thrill of satisfaction, as she remembered that she was now able to go to funerals. People in Brookdale were apt to go to funerals with a double purpose; they not only paid their tributes to the dead, but, in a quiet way, they enjoyed meeting the living. Their sympathies under those circumstances were quicker and nearer the surface, and rendered the friendly intercourse sweeter — though they did not realize this.

The day of Milly's funeral was one of those perfect days when one feels that to live is not enough — one must exult. After the services were over, Mandana and three or four other women walked down the street together in the soft sunshine.

To Mandana the occasion was one of unwonted, almost joyous excitement. She stepped firmly and held her head high. She felt herself a woman of the world, and had a pleasant consciousness of the superior quality of her new black cashmere gown. At the same time she was wondering which of the women would, in accordance with Brookdale custom at such times, invite her to tea, forgetting that she was now in a position to issue such an invitation herself.

At a cross street they stopped and stood in a group talking softly. One woman spoke of how natural little Milly looked, and then told how surprisingly natural her brother's little girl had appeared when she died, a year ago last fall. Then they discussed the flowers, the minister, health, sickness, death, and kindred subjects that suggested themselves to their homely minds.

"Your funeral," Mrs. Pond said, apropos of the large number present at the house they had just left, "is the place to find out how many friends you've got." All understood what she meant, and no one laughed; but the school teacher, a pale, black-eyed girl, spoke up sharply: —

"Well, for my part, I'd rather find it out when I'm alive. I don't care whether any one comes to my funeral or not. I can't enjoy them after I'm dead."

"Why, Miss Keith!" the others exclaimed. "You don't mean that! 'Course you want your friends to come to your *funeral!* To pay their last respects. Why, it's all they *can* do, and —"

"But I don't think so," interrupted the girl; "I want folks' attention while I'm alive, not their respects after I'm dead. I couldn't help thinking this afternoon how happy Milly would have been to have seen all those people when she was alive and well. She was a sociable little thing, but they kept her very close, poor child. No, we can do nothing for the dead! We can do much for the living!"

Silence followed this unorthodox outburst, and the little procession of women moved uneasily, the harmony between them turned to vague discord. But into Mandana's face had come a sympathetic expression. Tears stood in her eyes, two spots of red showed in her cheeks. Her heart beat so fast she felt choked, but she made a brave effort to be calm.

"Miss Keith," she said, in clear, decided tones, "I should be pleased to have you walk home and take tea with me."

. . . . . .

When it was reported in Brookdale some months later that Mandana Shepardson was dead, there was a genuine sensation throughout the town. Everybody was sorry — the demonstrations of their feeling varying not so much in proportion to the state of their acquaintance with Mandana as with the quality of their own sympathies. This is often the case when, as with her, a person has only the cooler ties of acquaintance and friendship on which to base a claim for remembrance. Honest, kindly feeling for Mandana there was in plenty, but she had had little opportunity to cultivate love. The few tears that were shed in her memory came from the eyes of happy mothers and tender-hearted young girls, some of whom had known her only slightly.

Alas! that it should take such a mighty power as death to remind us of the beauties and the duties of friendship! But thanks be that even that avails, if nothing else will!

Half a dozen men and women, among them the couple who had

"stood up" with Mandana and her bridegroom at their wedding, on hearing of her death, found that they had almost forgotten her existence. One man promptly made arrangements to get a day off from his work, to go to her funeral; and the former bridesmaid stopped in the midst of a large ironing to change her dress and walk a mile and a half to Mandana's house "to see if there was anything she could do."

There was "nothing, thank you very much." This from a small boy who opened the door to her. Almira Whittlesey noted with interest that it was Amos Waterman's boy. She had never seen the child before, but she would have known the Waterman ears anywhere.

Amos Waterman was one of those characters who, born and bred in a country town, leave it for the city, make a fortune, become "prominent men," and, returning occasionally to the old place, accompanied by all the paraphernalia of wealth, excite the envy and admiration of their former townspeople. He was Mandana's second or third cousin, and happened to be in Brookdale with his family on one of his triumphal tours, when the event occurred which very properly demanded his attention and action.

It was to be expected that whatever the Watermans undertook — even a funeral — would have some novel and stylish features about it. The first surprise had appeared in the shape of a large black-edged card, addressed to the friends of Mrs. Mandana Shepardson, and inviting said friends to attend her funeral, to be held at two o'clock, September the seventh. Copies of this card were posted on the churches, in the post-office, and in some of the stores, quite in the manner of a town-meeting warrant. Amos Waterman had once been a constable in Brookdale.

There was much comment, among the gossips, on this innovation; much more on the offish and stuck-up behavior of the Watermans, who, it was said, received no calls and accepted no offers of assistance. The braver portion of the community openly declared their opinion that it was an outrage not to "keep her" longer, instead of hurrying her into her grave the very day after — but all had a secret respect for the ways of the Watermans.

A noble gathering assembled at Mandana's little house on the appointed day. The three rooms on the first floor were filled with

the callers, and more stood in the tiny porch. The Watermanian hand was evident in the appearance of the interior. No blinds were closed, no shades drawn. The sun streamed in, flowers abounded, two canaries sang at each other loudly and enthusiastically. The coffin was not in sight — which fact was disappointing and even inexplicable to some; but others had heard that it was the style now to have it upstairs.

When the clock hands pointed to two, Amos Waterman appeared in the little entry connecting the rooms, and began to speak.

Surely this was the strangest address ever heard at a funeral. At the end of a dozen sentences, one woman gave an hysteric shriek, several began to weep, and two rose and left the house. Then succeeded the murmur of confused and astonished voices.

Mandana not dead?

Mandana alive and well!

Was the man crazy?

For an impressive moment the speaker paused as though to let his words sink into the hearts of his hearers. When he spoke again it was at some length, and with much warmth. He was a lawyer, and a good one, but never in his prosperous career had he made a better or more moving argument than on this strange and altogether unprecedented occasion. He ended with a long, graceful period, and then turned and held out his hand to a person descending the stairs.

It was Mandana! — but not the Mandana they had known. No bride of twenty ever carried herself more modestly and prettily than did the slender little woman who now made her way slowly to Mr. Waterman's side. Clad in soft gray silk, with a pink rose in her pretty gray hair, and another at her throat, she looked not unlike a bride as she stood there, pale and trembling with excitement, but trying to smile.

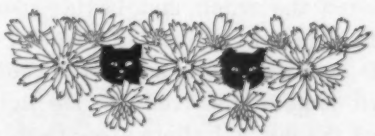
"Well, here I be," she said bravely. "And I hope you ain't all mad with me. I don't know what to say exactly, only I — I wanted to see how many friends I'd got, and I felt I'd rather have a good time with them that cared enough for me to come to my funeral *now*, than to have 'em come after I was really dead and couldn't know it. I mean to be fair about it, too. When I do die, there needn't one of you trouble to come if it ain't conven-

ient. And I thought if you cared enough to come to-day, perhaps you'd run in once in awhile hereafter. It's been awful lonesome;" and here she had to stop and use the new embroidered handkerchief which she held nicely folded in her hand.

At that the mourners rose and surrounded her. The women patted her on the back, and said brokenly, "Why, Mandana!" "For the land's sake!" "Why, Mis' Shepardson!" "*Course* we're your friends!" "We're dretful fond of you!" "Don't take on so!" "I sh'll come real often." "'N' so sh'll I!" They all wept sociably together for some little time, while the embarrassed men stood about awkwardly, wishing they would stop, and occasionally uttering a nervous "*Har*-har!"

When they had become calmer, and were discussing the many "particulars," always dear to the hearts of people like these, Mandana called their attention to the fact that in the wording of the black-edged card no untruth had been told. It was not announced that she was dead; her friends were invited to her funeral, and she didn't know why she hadn't a right to call her party a funeral if she wanted to! It was *her* funeral!

A little later the three Watermans made their appearance, laden with trays of ice-cream, cake, and coffee. These refreshments they dispensed liberally, and accompanied them with smiles and cordial greetings. Thus the funeral turned itself into a party, and mirth and jollity, and all the characteristics of a "real good time," prevailed the rest of the afternoon. Nor was the lesson so strangely taught forgotten. As a result, the lonely little woman was straightway taken into the arms of this community whose social life was kept up by running in and being run in upon. And so it was that Mandana made her debut into society on the day of her funeral.



Number Seven.

BY LIVINGSTONE B. MORSE.

GILES ENDICOTT strode along through the crisp winter night; at every step his feet crunched into the fine white snow that lay like powder beneath them. It was very cold and still; not a breath of air stirred the elms and hazels in the thicket across the road, and their motionless twigs formed a fine black tracery against the sky. Above, the stars shone through ever-thickening masses of gray cloud. There was a young moon just visible above the tops of the pines; her wan light fell upon the white world beneath, spreading the snow with glittering diamond points, and cast a phosphorescent pallor upon the dark windows of the Perkins' house.

Giles strode up to the house and stamped his feet upon the floor of the porch to shake the snow from them. Then he took from his greatcoat pocket a key, and, fitting it into the lock, let himself into the house.

Within was a pleasant warmth. Through the open door a faint red glow from the embers on the kitchen hearth penetrated into the hallway. Giles walked into the kitchen and stood in the middle of the room, fumbling for a match in his waistcoat pocket. A cat that had lain beside the fire came up to him and began rubbing herself back and forth against his legs. He could see by the firelight that it was a huge Persian cat, and that it had large, green eyes.

Presently he found the match, and, having struck it, proceeded by the light which it gave to search for a candle. There was one at hand on a table near the door, and also a cold supper spread, with a clean white napkin laid over it. He lighted the candle, and having stirred the fire and thrown on fresh wood, proceeded to eat his supper. When he had finished he drew a comfortable chair forward and sat down before the fire.

The house belonged to his widowed sister, Mrs. Perkins, who had lived there alone since the death of her husband. She had been called away unexpectedly on account of the illness of her favorite cousin. As there had not been time to close the house properly, she had stopped at the Endicotts' and asked Giles to walk over there and spend the night. Giles was a strongly built youth of twenty. He did not mind the loneliness and thought nothing of the walk, though the house stood on a branch some distance from the main road and was quite two miles from the nearest neighbor's.

His sister had given him many parting injunctions; had told him that she had spread supper for him, and if he wanted anything more he would find it in the "buttery." Even after she was seated in the sleigh she had called him to her side, and, bending low, had whispered impressively, "Be sure you wind that clock. I'm hard of hearing, and I'm not superstitious, but I don't like to think of its running down."

The kitchen was a cheery room; low-ceiled, with a white pine floor scrubbed to scrupulous cleanliness, and two large windows which seemed to gather sunlight all through the day. To-night, the green paper shades were drawn down and the outside world was invisible. Opposite the fireplace stood a wide, comfortable dresser laden with all manner of dishes and with bright tin pans which winked pleasantly in the firelight. Beside the door stood a deal table covered with a white cloth, and in the corner near it a tall eight-day clock. A half-dozen splint-bottomed chairs, a sink between the windows, and a high mantelpiece ornamented with two china dogs, a sea-shell, and a last year's almanac, completed the furniture.

Giles sat by the fire until he was warmed through; then he began to grow restless. The silence, broken only by the slight purring of the fire and the monotonous ticking of the clock, seemed strange and uncomfortable to him.

"Guess I'll go down cellar 'n fetch up 'n apple or two," he said to himself. He took up the candle and opened the door which led into the cellar. The candle flame flickered feebly in the draught, and as he stepped down the ladder-like stairway something brushed by that startled him, until he saw that it was

the cat, who, unperceived, had followed him. He soon found the apples and returned to the kitchen, the cat running up before.

A roasted apple had ought t' go kind er good t'night, — hadn't it, pussy?" he said, addressing the cat, who had settled herself comfortably beside the hearth and sat lifting first one fore-foot and then the other to snuggle them more cosily in her warm fur. The cat purred contentedly; her green eyes, half shut, blinked lazily at the hearthstone in front of her; while the clock, as if in answer to his question, ticked its monotonous, "Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock."

Giles drew a bit of string from his pocket, and, tying one end of it to the stem of an apple, wound the other about a nail just inside the chimney-piece. From time to time he twirled the string a little, so that the apple spun round and round above the flames. Presently it began to sputter and hiss: the juice oozed out and stood in a white froth about the stem. He watched the apple roasting, and now and then threw a fresh stick upon the fire, where it crackled and snapped for a few moments, and then, as there was no wind to make it roar or flare up, settled down to a steady, quiet blaze. Once or twice he addressed a word or two to the cat, who purred softly in reply; but his voice sounded so strange in the quiet of the house that soon he, too, lapsed into silence.

Absolute stillness reigned, except for the regular beat of the eight-day clock in the corner. "Tick-tock, tick-tock," it kept saying, with just the pause of a breath between, keeping time with monotonous regularity to the current of Giles' thoughts. It seemed to grow louder as the silence outside it grew more pronounced. Its incessant beat smote like the blows of a hammer.

Presently it struck with a hoarse, ominous jangle. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. At the first stroke Giles started from his chair.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed involuntarily. "Hanged if I knowed what it was at first — comin' so sudden like! Which reminds me that Maria said I was to wind it, and I hain't done it yet; it seems to me, though, that it don't need no windin' with that everlastin' '*tick-tock*' a-hammerin' away all the while."

He walked over to the clock and stood looking up at it. It

was very old. The enameled face was cracked and scarred by time. Above the face were painted the phases of the moon, but the machinery which worked them was evidently out of order, for the full moon leered down and winked a wicked eye from between the hemispheres where the crescent should have stood. He opened the glass door, took down the key from its nail inside, and wound up the weights as far as they would go. Then he replaced the key, closed the door, and returned to his seat by the fire.

"It's too early to turn in yet," he said; "I'll set here by the fire a little longer. I didn't reckon it 'd be so dreadful lonesome," he continued. "I wish now I'd a-brought somebody, or even a dog, for company; a cat don't seem right company, somehow, and it's terrible unsociable without a livin' thing to speak to."

"Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock," said the clock in the corner.

"Blamed if the old thing don't seem most as if it was alive," said he, turning again to look at it. "I never heered no clock with a tick like that afore." He moved uneasily in his chair; it seemed to him that some inner force was compelling him to listen for those beats, and to count them silently as they fell: "Tick-tock, tick-tock, one-two, one-two," till he realized how absurd it was. "Pshaw!" he cried, "what a fool I be!" and turned about again towards the fire.

The fire burned quietly and the apple began to grow brown and stopped simmering. Giles sat gazing into the glowing coals, and the clock ticked steadily on.

Presently the cat raised her head and stopped purring; her great green eyes were fixed upon the clock. So intent was her gaze that involuntarily Giles cast a look over his shoulder to see what had attracted her attention; he thought perhaps the cellar door had blown open.

No, the door was shut just as he had left it. There was nothing there; nothing stirring — nothing but the regular beat of the pendulum. "Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock."

The cat continued to look fixedly at something in the back part of the room. Her eyes, turned from the firelight, glowed like two great yellow topazes, each with a perpendicular streak of green down the center of the pupil. She sat there quietly enough

in the corner of the hearth, but it was evident that she was watching something.

Presently she turned her eyes slowly from side to side, as though she were following some one about the room; now they rested on one point, now on another; then they stopped for awhile, indicating something just behind Giles's chair. Giles watched her curiously. Again he turned about, but there was nothing to be seen.

It gave him an uncanny sort of feeling to see her stare thus at nothing. He moved his chair a little. "What you lookin' at, pussy?" he asked uneasily.

"Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock," said the clock; and, as it seemed to Giles, louder, more solemnly than before.

The cat now shifted her gaze again; this time it rested on a point between Giles and the fire; she might have been watching some one bending over it, so intently did she look. Then suddenly she rose, and backed slowly away from the corner, her hair standing up, but her great green eyes still fixed upon the same spot.

Giles rose, too. "What's the matter, pussy? What do you see?" he asked, trying vainly to discover some cause for her actions. The cat drew near to him and rubbed against his leg, but never moved her eyes for an instant from that spot before the fire.

He was not afraid, but he shivered a little. "Humph! that's mighty queer," he muttered. He felt strangely helpless and alone. He crossed the hall and opened the front door to look out at the night; there was company at least in the world outside. The door stuck a little, and he was obliged to put all his strength upon it; then it flew open with a force that almost threw him off his feet. At the same moment the cat dashed past him, and sped through the snow at the top of her speed, following the path to the wood-shed at the back of the house.

He stood a moment at the open door. The night was still and cold. The moon had set and the stars were hid by low-hanging clouds, heavy with unshed snow. There was a pale, wan light from the snow-covered earth. Now and then a heavy flake drifted silently down and fell on the floor of the porch. Not a breath of air stirred.

"Puss, puss," called Giles; "you comin' in again?"

"Tick-tock, tick-tock," said the clock from the kitchen; it was so still without that he could hear it plainly from where he stood on the porch. He shivered again; then went into the house and shut the door.

"The cat warn't much company, but she were better 'n nothin'," he said to himself. "Well, I reckon I better turn in now; 'tain't over lively here, to say the least." He banked the fire with ashes, then took up his candle and stood for a moment looking up at the clock; the hands pointed to a quarter past nine.

"I'll be hanged if I think I could live in the house with such a clock as you," he said under his breath. "I'd feel somehow as if you knowed what was agoin' on inside o' me."

"Tick-tock, tick-tock," said the clock; and Giles could almost have sworn he saw a meaning smile upon its scarred old face.

"Well, I'll be rid of ye upstairs," he said as he began ascending the broad steps, unconsciously keeping time to the beating of the pendulum. Tick-tock, one-two, step-step. "I do believe the thing's got into my head somehow," he continued, vexed at his own foolishness. "But I can't hear ye in there, that's sure," and he flung open the door of the spare chamber.

The damp chill of an unused room smote him through and through. The spare chamber was large, and, according to New England standards, well furnished. It contained an old-fashioned four-post bed, a high chest of drawers, a long mirror divided at the top, and four or five horse-hair covered chairs. The floor was scrubbed white, but there was no carpet except a strip beside the bed. It was desolate, cold, and bare, — the very cleanliness making it seem colder.

Giles undressed hastily, and, blowing out his candle, crept between the sheets, pulling the heavy counterpanes and comforters well up about his ears. "Phew! it *is* cold when ye can see yer breath!" he said, his teeth chattering; "but once I get warmed through, I'll sleep snug enough."

But this was not so easy. The silence was so deep as to be almost appalling, and sleep held aloof despite his courting. He was restless and uneasy, and tossed from side to side of the wide bed, although every moment brought him in contact with an unwarmed portion of the icy linen.

"It's awful still," he said; "but I expect I'll git used to it after a spell. Anyhow, it 's better 'n the everlastin' tickin' o' that clock."

Suddenly he raised himself on his elbow and listened. What was that faint, far-off sound that fell in regular intervals upon the silence? Muffled by distance, it seemed like the beat of a hammer; but as his ear became accustomed to it, he made out the monotonous "tick-tock, tick-tock" of the clock in the kitchen. Giles shivered, but it was not with cold.

"Can't be that I hear that clock way up here!" said he, and he listened again. Yes, there was no mistaking it; the "tick-tock" sounded as plainly as though the clock stood in the next room. "Well, that does beat all!" he said; "must be that everything else is so still to-night the least sound's heard." He pulled the counterpane over his head and lay a few moments trying to sleep; but it was useless, with that incessant ticking sounding in his ears.

At length he rose, threw on some of his clothes, and, lighting his candle, went down into the kitchen. "I've got to stop the thing," he muttered; "hard to set or not, I can't stand it. I never see such a clock in all my born days; there's something queer with it, I'd like to bet."

He pulled open the door, and grasping the heavy pendulum, brought it to a standstill. It stopped at once; the "tick-tock" ceased; but he had become so accustomed to it that he could not realize this at first, and seemed still to hear it, — the ghost of a tick, — pulsating through the silence in even, regular beats. Of course this was mere fancy, but he cast a fearful glance about the dimly lighted kitchen, and then a second time crept up to bed.

Once more he laid his head upon the cold linen-cased pillow; there was no sound to break the stillness now, yet no sleep came to him; there was a dim consciousness of waiting in the air.

Presently, little shivers of cold began to run through the room; chilly breaths, not like the draught from an open door, but wavelets of cold, like the waves of water that creep up on the beach in advance of the breakers. Soon the air all about him seemed in motion; it commenced to swing back and forth, to and fro, in slow, steady pulses, as if swept by the even strokes of a fan. He

could feel it plainly upon his bared face and throat, for in his excitement he had thrown back the bedclothes. Slowly, slowly the heavy air swept from side to side, and gradually the even, regular movement resolved itself into sound. He stopped breathing; he listened so intently that his brain seemed to reel and burst with the strain, and bright flashes struck across his staring eyeballs; from afar off, out of the silence, rose the slow, steady beat of a pendulum. There was no mistaking that sound; *it was the ticking of the clock which he had stopped.*

In spite of the cold, a clammy sweat broke out upon him; he listened in abject terror to the sound coming nearer and nearer. Now it was mounting the stairs, just as he had mounted them, step-by-step, step-by-step, in time to its own regular beat. Now it was coming along the passage; nearer and louder, nearer and louder, and now here was a little pause; it was just outside the door. Giles held his breath; he felt that if it crossed the threshold he would go mad or die with terror.

The pause was but a moment,—and then the sound was in the room. "Tick-toçk, tick-tock, tick-tock," loud and clear, as though the clock stood just at the foot of the bed. Back and forth swung the pendulum; to and fro, as if urged by invisible hands, that to Giles' excited fancy were beating it remorselessly into his brain with that awful, "Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock." Louder and louder it grew; further and further it swung: heavy triphammers drove it now; to and fro, to and fro, always in the same even time, "Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock," till the air reeled and quivered and the roof shook with the heavy reverberations. Now it was swinging the whole length of the room; and now it beat through the roof and went clanging out under the white stars with a roar that was deafening. The length of the world it swung; the length of the universe. There was no stopping it: it was huge, awful, gigantic. Giles, yes, the world itself, was swallowed up in it; and it would go on forever.

. . . . . .

The delicate twigs of the elms and hazels lay in sharp lines against the faint, pink dawn as Giles Endicott, haggard and half clad, plunged through the snow-drifts that blocked the cross-road.

"Why, Giles," cried Farmer Green, in surprise, pulling up his

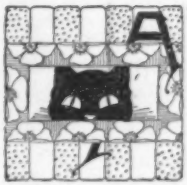
horses at sight of the white, terrified face; "Where you runnin' to? What's up? What's the matter?"

"It's the clock," said Giles, pointing frantically backward over his shoulder. "It's the clock; don't ye hear it? '*Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock?*' It's inside my head: I can't hear nothin' else; there ain't no stoppin' it; it'll go on forever."

"Well, I declare," muttered Farmer Green, "that's the seventh person that clock has driven crazy. Since Captain Homer bought it from the band of gypsies that camped near the village two years ago, it's changed hands a dozen times. I wonder who'll get it next."

Information Wanted.

BY PERCIE W. HART.



AS some people feel themselves imposed upon by a story that ends in an interrogation point, I wish to state at the outset that this narrative deals with an unsolved mystery. My only excuse for publishing the facts here given is my conviction that among seventy millions of Americans there must be one who can supply the missing links. I therefore take the public into my confidence, with the hope of securing the cooperation of thousands of active intellects in aiding me to work out the complete solution of a surprising social anomaly.

I reside at 527 Riverside Avenue, in the busy manufacturing city of Newark, N. J. As I came out of my front door on the morning of the sixteenth day of November, 1895, some few minutes before the seven o'clock factory whistles blew, my dog came bounding towards me, carrying the remains of a small paper kite in his mouth. As I bent over to pat him on the head, I noticed that the tail of the kite was constructed from pieces of paper that had been written upon. Carelessly detaching one of these pieces, and glancing over it with a sort of mild curiosity, I became deeply interested, and eagerly secured the remainder.

These crumpled sheets were all of about the same size, and appeared to have been torn from an ordinary pocket memorandum book. The handwriting was that of a thoroughly methodical man, and the pages being numbered at the corners, it was merely the work of a few moments to arrange them in their proper sequence. To my surprise and delight, not a single number was missing, and I give their contents herewith, without change or comment. As the matter is continuous I have dispensed with quotation marks, these being unnecessary to distinguish the diary from my own narrative.

The first page, numbered three, however, may be likened to a title-page, and bears the following descriptive wording in a small neat script: —

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS

HEREBY DEVOTED

TO THE

SUBJECT OF

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES

JANUARY, 1889.

The matter then continues uninterruptedly in the form of a diary, as follows: —

Jan. 3, 1889. It seems almost absurd for me to enter into a full explanation of my purposes in beginning this little book, as it is scarcely probable that any one but myself will ever read it. But parental example as well as inherited traits of character have conduced to make me systematic in all my undertakings, great or small. I have therefore set aside this small volume for the sole purpose of recording anything that would help to explain the unaccountable disappearances from time to time of men occupying good social position, and possessed of liberal wealth.

Some few short months ago I should probably have laughed at anybody who would have ventured to suggest that there was any such mystery; but the fact of my becoming a directly interested party has caused me to realize the magnitude and possibilities of my subject. Nay, more; if any one would but take occasion to note the number of such disappearances chronicled by his favorite newspaper in the course of a twelvemonth, one would be apt to realize the importance of the subject, and wonder at the singular apathy of the general public in regard to it.

The reason for my becoming a specially interested party may as well be stated at once. *My own father has thus disappeared!* As he was a man of ample fortune, free from any special business

cares, in vigorous bodily health, without any taint of inherited insanity, and scarcely past threescore years, the theory of suicide — aside from the non-discovery of the body — is wholly irrational.

At about four o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, the 26th day of October, 1888, he left his house for the purpose of looking after the wants of a tenant. He never returned, never called upon the lessee, and his disappearance was as absolutely and mysteriously accomplished as if he had been instantly converted into nothingness. The fact of our being on a more or less secluded street may account for his passing down the block unnoticed, but it is truly remarkable that after he went out of the front gate, no one can be found who remembers seeing him anywhere. With his wide acquaintance, distinctive dress, and commanding appearance, he was not one likely to pass unnoticed. Yet, in spite of liberal rewards, and the very best detective skill in the country, not the faintest sign of a clue can be discovered.

My father had been especially hearty and cordial in his family relations during the few weeks preceding the catastrophe, and in spite of my better judgment my mind is filled with inexpressible fears and vague forebodings. I have no close friend for a confidant, and even if I had, should be very much puzzled in regard to enlisting his aid or sympathy, for the reason that I have absolutely nothing material to confide.

January 8. In looking over the documents and books pertaining to my father's estate, I find that everything is in perfect order, some future contingencies even being provided for. If it were not for my own knowledge of my father's extremely systematic ways, I should be forced to the conclusion that he had arranged his affairs in the expectation of just such an event as has occurred.

January 17. The Boston *Star* contains an account of a disappearance case. It is really remarkable what a small item they have made of it, but I presume that the general public cares little to read about a mystery not yet unveiled.

A well-known banker and gold broker, John C. Boerum, senior partner of the firm of Boerum & Updyke, with offices in the Dorchester Building, on Tremont Street, leaves his place of busi-

ness at half past two in the afternoon of the tenth instant, with the announced intention of proceeding to his home in Brookline. The elevator boy remembers that, as was his usual custom, he turned to the right on going out of the main door of the building, which was in the proper direction for his car at the corner of School Street. But in spite of this, an old acquaintance of Mr. Boerum's is quite positive that he saw him walking hurriedly across the Common, within a few moments of the time at which he was known to have left the office. His continued absence from home and business created no special alarm until about noon of the following day. Mr. Boerum is reported to have been in good health, with genial family relations, and his partner has stated that there could be no cause for business worry, as the firm had made more money in the past year than in any two previous ones of their history.

February 16. I have just concluded an exhaustive investigation of my father's business affairs, and I am rather surprised to note that in the past ten years he has lost considerable sums by stock speculation; but as these losses are much more than offset by his profits in other operations, I should have passed it over but for this fact, which, after all, may be nothing more than a mere coincidence. These items, charged against Stock Speculation, Profit and Loss account, though all consisting individually of uneven amounts in both dollars and cents, add up to exactly one hundred thousand dollars, even money. The checks for these items were all made payable to bearer, and are, therefore, without any endorsement, and inquiry at the bank elicits the fact that they were all cashed personally by my father.

February 24. Am utterly unable to find a stock broker who has ever handled an account for my father.

March 4. After a careful personal cross-examination, I must confess that I seem heretofore to have been actuated by a spirit of morbid curiosity rather than by a hearty desire to unveil some hidden mystery. But while I am willing to acknowledge that this apparent loss by stock speculation of exactly one hundred thousand dollars in ten years is hardly likely to have any bearing upon my father's disappearance, the fact of the personally cashed checks and the absence of explanatory details seem to warrant

me in seeking some further clue to the transactions. With this object in view, I am carefully going over every book, document, or memorandum of his in my possession.

March 6. In spite of all my close research, the only suspicious item that I have found is a name, written in an address book of my father's, which comprised both business and social connections. Upon one page — sandwiched in between a number of other names — were the two words, "Valjean Narpoli."

Contrary to my father's usual custom, no address was given, and no indication as to the business attributes of the individual (if such a cognomen really belongs to an individual). But there were two points noticeable about this strange name. The first is the manner in which it is written. Instead of the usual carefully rounded and shaded letters of my father's familiar chirography, these, while retaining his individuality, are shaky and somewhat indistinct. They look as if the writer had been laboring under some strong nervous excitement. Moreover, it is the only item so written in all the mass of matter at my disposal. The second point is an important one, as I believe. Before setting it down here I shall take pains to verify it more thoroughly.

March 8. Owing to the nature of the other names upon the same page, I am absolutely certain that the words "Valjean Narpoli" were written between ten and eleven years ago. The relation between this name, the apparent loss by stock speculation of exactly one hundred thousand dollars in ten years, and my father's mysterious disappearance, — this is the question to be solved. I shall follow up these few clues tenaciously.

Jan. 3, 1890. It is now a full year since I began this record. That I have not been able to add a word to it for over nine months is not from any lack of effort on my part. I have subscribed for the leading newspapers of the world, and I scan their columns closely for any details of my hobby, and, of course, have noted several additional cases since that of Mr. Boerum. But as they contain no distinctive features, I have not thought them of sufficient import to be entered. I have inserted advertisements in many newspapers asking for information in regard to Valjean Narpoli. The wording was carefully guarded and framed as if by one who had valuable information to impart, and they were signed,

of course, with a disguised name and address. Up to date, however, I have received no replies.

February 3. In very desperation at my ill success, I am going to note a French disappearance which has been printed in this morning's papers. M. Henri D'Affleur, member of the Chamber of Deputies for the department of the Loire, well known on the Bourse as a successful speculator in South American mining stocks, who has resided at 142 Rue St. Denis, Paris, for the last thirty years, has unaccountably disappeared. He leaves his residence for a short walk in the Bois, and fails to return. No one remembers seeing him after he left the house, and the police are absolutely without any plausible clue. Health, finances, social relations, and future prospects are entirely unquestionable. There are no special features to distinguish his case from any other, but the remarkable sameness of details in all these disappearances is so peculiar as to be positively suspicious.

February 19. Have received a copy of the current issue of the *Révue*, containing a special article called forth by the recent disappearance of M. D'Affleur. If I had needed anything to corroborate my incipient suspicions, I have it here at last in the person of one who is following out a similar theory.

The writer claims an intimate personal friendship with the missing man, and shows a keen insight into the workings of social economics. After a minute account of D'Affleur's temperament, attainments, and ambitions, he proceeds to argue against the possibility of his having committed suicide. He then branches off upon the general subject of mysterious disappearances, and I here write down a condensation of some of his most pertinent thoughts.

"In a journalistic experience of close upon a quarter of a century," the writer remarks, "it has fallen to my lot to chronicle the mysterious disappearance of many members of the upper class of society. Whether such a condition of affairs obtains among the lower classes it is extremely difficult to determine, owing to the less important position they occupy in the public estimation, but from my own experience I am inclined to the belief that it is comparatively rare.

"In regard to the former, I am able to state that in 1882 — the first year of which I have memoranda — there were five such

disappearances in Paris alone. While the number has varied from year to year, the tendency has been towards steady increase, and in the past year (1889) it reached the surprising total of fourteen. It would be interesting if the statistics on this subject, for France, as well as for the rest of the civilized world, were obtainable.

"Leaving statistics and crude theories behind, and dismissing the idea of suicide, let us return to original causes and seek for some plausible motive for voluntary absence. Taking the special class of victims concerned for seven years back, I find that the average age is sixty-two. They are, without exception, men of means as well as of social or political importance, with good vitality, and in nearly every case their harmonious family affairs were beyond the shadow of suspicion.

"With the three things that are possible of human attainment: —

Health
Wealth (in money as well as in fame)
Happiness

they were abundantly provided. My theory of a motive, therefore, would be something as follows: —

"From the cradle to the grave man expends his daily energy in seeking out new work for his muscles, new fields for his eyes, or new sounds for his ears. The individual methods may be far removed from one another, but the motive is the same. It can be unequivocally stated that the average man is never contented in the full meaning of the word. Even unlimited success will pall, and the multi-millionaire, the victorious general, and the world-renowned scientist, become victims of ennui at the very height of success. There are times in every man's life when he asks himself the use of it all. Why strive for apples that are found to be sour and worm-eaten? Why toil and labor when graves and even good deeds are so soon forgotten? Oh, to escape this incessant expenditure of time and thought upon problems connected merely with the animal wants of our human existence!

"Imagine the strength of such feelings in the class of which we are treating. Everything has been attained, and for them, unlike the humble artisan or prospering trader, there is absolutely

no future to look forward to. Philanthropy, patronage, the spreading of favorite doctrines or theories only put off the inevitable time when, unless death comes quickly, such a man will surely relapse into a driveling dotard. The biographies, diaries, personal memoirs, and public actions of the world's great men are the best proofs of this sad truth.

"Granted, therefore, that we have a possible cause or motive for disappearance, what is the nature of the novelty in living so to be attained? That is the knotted skein, the unknown quantity that we cannot even conjecture.

"By the careful reasoner, however, it will be at once admitted that no return to a lower condition of life would content a man who had once mounted the ladder. On the other hand, the view from its topmost rung — even if again attainable — would be no novelty. The new existence must be on an entirely different plane and in entirely different circumstances. We must, however, instinctively acknowledge the presence of confederates in such a well-executed plan of disappearance, whatever the result of such plans. This would mean to our human minds a lavish expenditure of money. What is obtained by the disappearance in return for this outlay is something that only time and thorough investigation can reveal."

Feb. 19, 1893. Three years have gone by since I last wrote in this book! Three years that seem like three months, and then again like three centuries. In this time I have gained, enjoyed, and lost a wife and child! It seems incredible that such unselfish love and devotion can be without fruit in a hereafter. During these years I have forgotten my hobby. To-day, however, hardly knowing what I did, I picked up a newspaper, and almost the first paragraph that met my eyes was the following: —

"Ten days have now elapsed since John C. Graham, banker, of Exchange Place Building, New York City, left his office, and so far not the slightest clue as to his fate has been obtained. He started from his place of business at half past three in the afternoon, with the announced intention of dropping into the Union League Club before going to his home. The cabman who drove him uptown avers that when he reached the club, and opened the door of his vehicle, he found the man had vanished. Mr. Graham

has been a member of the Stock Exchange for over twenty-five years, and has been a power in the world of finance during the best part of that time. The last person who is known to have talked with Mr. Graham is a foreign-looking individual whose whereabouts at the present time are unknown. He was closeted with the banker just before the latter left his office. The attendant is positive that his reception by Mr. Graham was extremely cordial, and that the latter addressed him as Mr. *NARPOLI!*"

As I write, my hand trembles like the hunter's when he spies his long-sought quarry. At last, thank God! I have found something confirmatory of my suspicions. No power on earth can convince me that this Narpoli is not the Valjean Narpoli whose name I found in such suspicious connection with my revered father's transactions.

March 28. The skilled detective who wishes to secure a criminal often finds it expedient to disguise his identity for a time, and associate with that section of society most likely to have furnished the law-breaker. The reason of this lies in the tendency of mankind towards herding in classes whose interests are more or less in common. From titled aristocrats down to sneak thieves and "second-story" men they all tend to form coteries or friendly circles in keeping with their various grades. In the present case, the suspected class consists of men of wealth and high social standing. They are the class whence the mysterious disappearances are drawn. Why should the methods of the detective not succeed if applied in this direction? If I should disguise myself as a man of, say, sixty years of age, replete with honors, satiated with wealth, and openly complaining of life's unsatisfactoriness; if I should seek the society of other men so constituted and so thinking, is it not reasonable to suppose that an opportunity for disappearance may be held out to me also?

May 4. Have been to Europe and back again since the last entry. I left as a youngish-looking, blond-complexioned American. I have returned a mature, gray-haired, dark-skinned foreigner, — presumably French. The art of disguise has never been lost in Paris.

May 12. Have located in this city, where my personality is

utterly unknown. Have rented an elegantly furnished mansion, and have already received some considerable attentions.

May 13. A morning newspaper contains the following item: — "We hear on very good authority that the latest distinguished addition to society is a member of one of the leading families of Europe, and that he has become nauseated with the subtleties and petty intrigues of court life."

Have been elected a member of an extremely conservative club, that numbers among its members a large proportion of those whom I now denominate "suspicious characters."

May 20. It is now generally understood that I belong to some aristocratic French family, and that for various political reasons I have been educated and brought up in England. I am spreading my small fortune with a lavish hand.

June 16. Have carefully canvassed the whole list of my acquaintances, and in confidential conversations have taken pains to express my utter disgust with the world and its vagaries. I may be mistaken, but a certain railroad president appears to take a special interest in me.

June 29. At last — I have met the man I seek! He came to the club with the railroad president, and was introduced to me as M. Valjean Narpoli. Though consumed by an inward fever, I managed to appear listless and uninterested, and was but scantily cordial in my greetings.

June 30. In spite of my theory, I could not help being agitated when Narpoli made evident efforts to ingratiate himself with me this evening. Without attracting his attention, I have made careful note of his personality. He is an under-sized, sallow-complexioned, foreign-looking individual; dresses well, but with an air of haste; linen spotless, but tie not properly adjusted; hands and feet small and well shaped, and the former, especially, almost feminine. His forehead is high, nose and ears unobtrusive, and chin and back of head well balanced. His hair and moustache are scanty and almost white, and his eyes are — indescribable, for the reason that their aspect is ever changing.

In our few hours' conversation I have in turn set him down as a lunatic, a philanthropist, a criminal, a man of peaceful instincts, a human bloodhound, a lover of humanity, and various other an-

tagonistic mentalities; simply and solely from the change in the expression of his eyes.

The man is a perfect prodigy; I have tried him in every conceivable direction, and can find no limits to his attainments. Languages, archæology, philosophy, astronomy, and all the rest of the learned sciences seem like a well-read book to him. And I find him expressing his ideas with the air of one who knows much more than he says, but conceives you hardly capable of understanding it.

Sometimes he seems almost Mephistophelean, and I grow cold at heart when I think of my father. Again I feel as if I should be perfectly willing to trust my own life in his hands.

July 2. Valjean Narpoli is now under my own roof, as an invited guest! It would be possible for me to enter his chamber, and force a confession at the pistol's mouth. But has he something to confess, or are my suspicions but the offspring of an unduly excited brain? And again, is such a one as I conceive him to be likely to confess, even at death's door? My only chance is to wait — wait — wait!

July 3. After a late dinner we passed many hours in delightful conversation. Our talk drifted through all the mazes of dogmatism, theosophy, and evolution. Several times he seemed to regard me with a peculiar, questioning look; and I shall be extremely surprised if he does not make some disclosures to-morrow — or rather, as the sun is already showing, to-night.

What the outcome will be I know not. From a vindictive suspicion of a possible conspiracy, my ideas and feelings have become so mixed and chaotic as to be impossible of logical expression.

July 4. This evening as we sat at ease in my library, Narpoli suddenly drew himself up in his chair, and waving his hands excitedly, spoke as follows: —

"You doubtless consider yourself conversant with the principal inventions and discoveries that have marked the advance of civilization in this nineteenth century? The subtle force called electricity, that is captured, controlled, and utilized, and yet whose component parts and extreme powers are utterly unknown; the effect of sound waves as recorded upon a revolving waxen cylinder, which perpetuates our songs and voices, while the primal

cause of such sounds remains undiscoverable; the steam locomotive, with — but there is no need to go down the whole line. A single illustration would serve to show the puny nature of our knowledge of all.

"A man of your age and experience knows how utterly unsatisfactory are the so-called exact sciences to an intelligent mind. But, disappointing as they are, they seem to be all we can get; and the few short years that remain to you and me will doubtless see but a scant advance beyond the present knowledge line. It is sad to think of dying without even a dim perception of the many truths around us. But enough of science; I'm going to tell you a fairy tale.

"Once on a time — before the wolf nursed Romulus — before the writing appeared on the wall of the king's palace at Babylon, — aye, and even before the chisel's edge had shaped the sphinx-stone — there lived certain men who devoted their lives to the attainment of knowledge. It may astonish you to hear that, even in that distant day, these wise men knew considerably more than the average savant of the present century. One reason for this lay in the comparative newness of the world, and the lack of countless antagonistic theories. These wise men were only human, however, and although they lived longer than the average of mankind, by reason of their peaceful, studious habits, still their day of reckoning came at last — as it must come to each one of us. But they had thought of and prepared for this contingency beforehand; and their stores of learning were passed on to favored disciples.

"This is certainly a pretty idea, is it not? If it were only true. Imagine the possibilities of such long-continued investigations, supposing that this study had been kept up continuously even to the present day. With your keen perception you can readily see that such a class of men must be thousands of years in advance of our own time, in their knowledge of all things.

"Would it not be a priceless boon, after one has exhausted the possibilities of ordinary civilization, to pass the few remaining years of life amidst such knowledge? To have the common mysteries of life swept aside like spray from one's forehead, and to be able to tread close upon even eternity itself.

"No, not a word more now. Is it really a fable? You shall know everything to-morrow. Good night."

The whole mystery of the disappearance of such men as my father lies perfectly plain before me. The French journalist's "unknown quantity" is known. Valjean Narpoli has promised, and to-morrow I shall record herein the final —

Here the paper was torn off in a jagged, uneven line, leaving the sentence incomplete.

Such is the exact wording of the writing upon the pieces of paper that formed the tail of the curious kite that my black retriever dog brought to my feet on the morning of the sixteenth day of November, 1895, as was related in full in the preface to this narrative.

While the story is extremely coherent, it will be noted that there is a marked absence of any names and places that could be used in identifying the writer. He is an American, however, and the principal action evidently takes place in some important city of our land. The references to one named Valjean Narpoli seem to be the only tangible clue, and his personal appearance is minutely described.

Where the kite came from, and why such a book was mutilated for the purpose of completing it, is immaterial until this promoter of disappearances among the wearied rich is discovered. My motive in making the facts public is to ascertain whether the stupendous conclusion to be drawn from them is entitled to credence, or if it is merely the offspring of some deluded brain.

Can any one answer the question?

In Memory of Tom Satan.

BY SHANNON BIRCH.

ONAS McFERRAL had followed the life of a seafaring man for many years before resigning the cramped quarters of a-shipboard for the wide acres of a Kansas homestead.

The same breadth of sky covered Jonas's quarters on land and sea.

It was in the spring of 1869 that the one-time mariner, departing from the sea, had homesteaded the northeast quarter of section seventeen, township three, south; range three, east, in Thomas County, Kansas — one hundred and sixty acres, more or less, according to government survey. At that time he was forty years old.

Elminta Minerva was thirty-six, when, in the fall of the same year, she had left New England for the West, and homesteaded the southwest quarter of said section seventeen, township three, in the aforesaid county of Thomas, and State of Kansas, containing one hundred and sixty acres, more or less, according to government survey.

It is hardly necessary to state that Jonas was Irish, and Elminta Minerva Yankee.

Both had been heart-whole until this date.

A half section of prairie inhabited by two souls animated by the same aim should produce, in perfection, the conditions of a rural romance. Such were the conditions in this instance, and as was to be expected, Jonas and Elminta Minerva fell in love. The utilities, however, were not to be forgotten, and the marriage day was postponed until each should, in homesteader language, have proved up; they would then be the owners of a half section, a rich domain for them and their successors.

Between the one-roomed, white-curtained cottonwood dwelling of the spinster settler and the windowless dugout of her bachelor

lover lay a half mile of Kansas prairie; and midway, intersecting the beaten path, ran the Solomon, a three-rod wide stream of clear water, with a bottom in patches of sand and of pebbles. On either bank was a growth of willow and elm, cottonwood and wild plum, that made a May day on the Solomon a pleasant epoch in life. In crossing this stream — as was his daily custom — Jonas used a ford which lay, not as the crow flies, between his abode and that of his beloved, but at an angle with each dwelling, — this because of the shallow fording at that point.

The time for proving up the claims was now fast approaching. Nor had the years these two had waited been by any means without fruit. With money saved from his seafaring days, Jonas had fenced his land, and otherwise added to its attractiveness. He had also broken the sod of eighty acres for corn planting.

To Elminta Minerva's claim also had been added many improvements, provided for from a frugal fund hoarded from years of school teaching, and the remainder of this sum, together with the yearly yield from an industrious flock of hens and two well-preserved cows, combined to make for her a degree of prosperity that needed only a receipt of a deed for her homestead, and marriage with Jonas, fully to round out her happiness.

The family mansion was to be built on Elminta Minerva's quarter section, and to that end she had carefully cultivated the health of six Norwegian pines, for which she had paid the tree agent five dollars apiece. These pine trees were set in a double row, leading from the knoll selected as the site of their residence to the section line on which ran a road to the county seat. Besides the trees, in summer clumps of hollyhocks, phlox, sweet-williams, and touch-me-nots still further beautified the knoll.

The one periodical that Elminta Minerva received each spring without previous subscription was *The Floral Guide*, a publication to which she gave untiring consideration. Not even questions of national finance could have received more exhaustive study than did this flower-loving spinster's yearly problem of how far she could make a dollar and a quarter go in flower seeds.

Anxious day when the letter enclosing an order was deposited in the post-office. Happy day when the precious package of seeds at last arrived. Thrice happy day when they were buried in

boxes filled with rich soil and placed in the square patch of March sunshine shimmering through the south window.

Jonas, also, had his touches with nature, but these took a less domestic turn. Sometimes, on a June evening, he would linger along the path to Elminta Minerva's, dreaming of love, his ear intent on the song of the yellow-crested meadow lark, whose ebon necklace rose and fell with the mighty trills of its familiar repertory, or to the staccato evolutions of the wood jay, bravely parading in his regimentals of faded blue. The passion of love within was flattering the face of nature, as was every humble artifice of bird or beast. At such times the air was undoubtedly translucent.

But upon this state of primeval contentment and reasonable hopes one blot existed. In spite of his love of the sky and sense of relationship with nature, Jonas felt an ineradicable distrust for one of the humblest of all created things, — namely, Elminta Minerva's black cat, — Tom Satan. This, too, in spite of the fact that the animal was the pet and companion of his spinster neighbor, who had brought him, a small black kitten, from New England to Kansas, and had watched him grow up with the homestead until both had a permanent abiding place in her affections. And just as she had named her Kansas home Deepdene — out of all proportion with geographical consistency — simply to perpetuate the generations old name of the farm in the East, so the sentiment-loving spinster had christened her cat Tom because this had been the name of a long lineage of cats of the New England Deepdene.

The "Satan" was the addition of Jonas, who thus signified his belief in the animal's malign influence upon two lives that were meant to be joined, — if not upon two farms as well. To be sure, his predictions of disaster had not yet been verified; but what of this marriage in the spring, whereby all these years of toil and waiting should be crowned? Who could tell but that Tom Satan waited and hungered for this opportunity?

It was in vain that Tom Satan would arch his back and rub against Jonas's boot-leg, inviting a friendship that he thought ought to exist after so many years of acquaintanceship. The other ostentatiously repelled all such advances.

One day, in imparting to Tom's owner his fears that the animal would cross their marriage, Jonas even went so far as sepulchrally to quote from nautical hymnology: —

"A black cat carries a gale in her tail,
A gale in her tail has she;
And she'll let it go with tooth and toe
When she sails, sir, on the sea.
Then, hey, there! and belay there!
No black cat for me,
Whenever I sail, whenever I sail,
Whenever I sail on the sea.

"A black cat's back is the lightning's track,
And the hurricane's blast hath she,
And she'll let it go with tooth and toe," — etc., etc.

But Elminta Minerva, yielding on every other essential point, remained obdurate on this, declaring that Jonas's was only a sailor's superstition, and that under the circumstances neither he nor Tom Satan was to blame.

On this special day Jonas, after the heat of debates, remained longer than usual in the glow of reconciliation, and when he started home the sun was below mid afternoon. For this reason he did not take his usual path, but instead made a bee line through the pasture, striking the river down stream for the ford. Upon reaching the bank he tucked his trousers legs into his boot tops and stepped into the water, there running not more than four inches deep. The soft sand yielded slightly, but Jonas, unheeding, took a step forward, another, then another, when — but what was he walking in? Something was wrong! Something was dragging him down! Then with the force of a lightning bolt the truth struck him — he was in a quicksand!

Like a lion in toils Jonas roused himself and wrenched his foremost foot back, in his struggle partly turning to the bank from which he had entered. But though straining so that at times he fell prone, he was unable to drag either foot up again. Inch by inch the awful sand gained upon him. It reached his boot tops; he felt the cold inlet of sand and water like the grip of death. He writhed and tugged, but to no avail. He shouted, but no answer came. In vain he peered this way and that; there was no one to succor. He would die there — smothered like a beast.

Suddenly his despairing gaze detected that which roused him to fresh effort. Over his head, but far out of reach, hung suspended from the branch of an elm tree the sinewy arms of a giant grapevine. With trembling haste he pulled off his coat, and clutching at the end of one sleeve, cast the garment with all his strength toward the vine.

It fell short by at least a foot. Again the coat described a frantic revolution, and again without success. A third attempt brought it no nearer the friendly vine, while it plunged Jonas even deeper into the awful sand.

Desisting, finally, from this vain maneuver, Jonas put all his force into a mighty cry for help. One, two, three times his voice died away unanswered, but to the fourth appeal there came to him, as if in mocking response, a shrill meow; and straightway there appeared upon the bank, picking his way daintily, with flaunting tail and mewing in responsive gasps, a well-known ink-black figure. It was Tom Satan! The cold drops stood out on Jonas's forehead. Were his predictions of the animal's malign influence thus horribly verified? and had the creature followed him unnoticed, that he might be a spectator of his sufferings?

Whatever his past motives, Tom Satan now seemed bent only upon cultivating an intimacy with the man who had so long repulsed him, but who now lifted up his voice with no apparent purpose other than that of inviting Tom Satan's companionship. He even made his way with a series of little purring meows to the river's edge, and put out one paw as though to walk to Jonas. But at the touch of the water he withdrew the dripping member, shook it vigorously, backed away and stood for a moment irresolute. Then, as though seized by a sudden inspiration, he sprang into the tree from which hung the tantalizing grapevine, and, with the cautious tread of a rope-walker, clawed his way out over the dead bough, stopping every now and then — as the branch bent beneath his weight — to give a reassuring meow.

Apparently Tom Satan considered the feat of reaching Jonas *via* the dead branch and the grapevine feasible, and the end desirable. But what might have been the outcome of these maneuvers will remain forever uncertain, for midway in his journey the unexpected happened; the dead limb snapped, and Tom Satan,

clutching at the nearest sound branch, was left hanging by his fore paws in mid air.

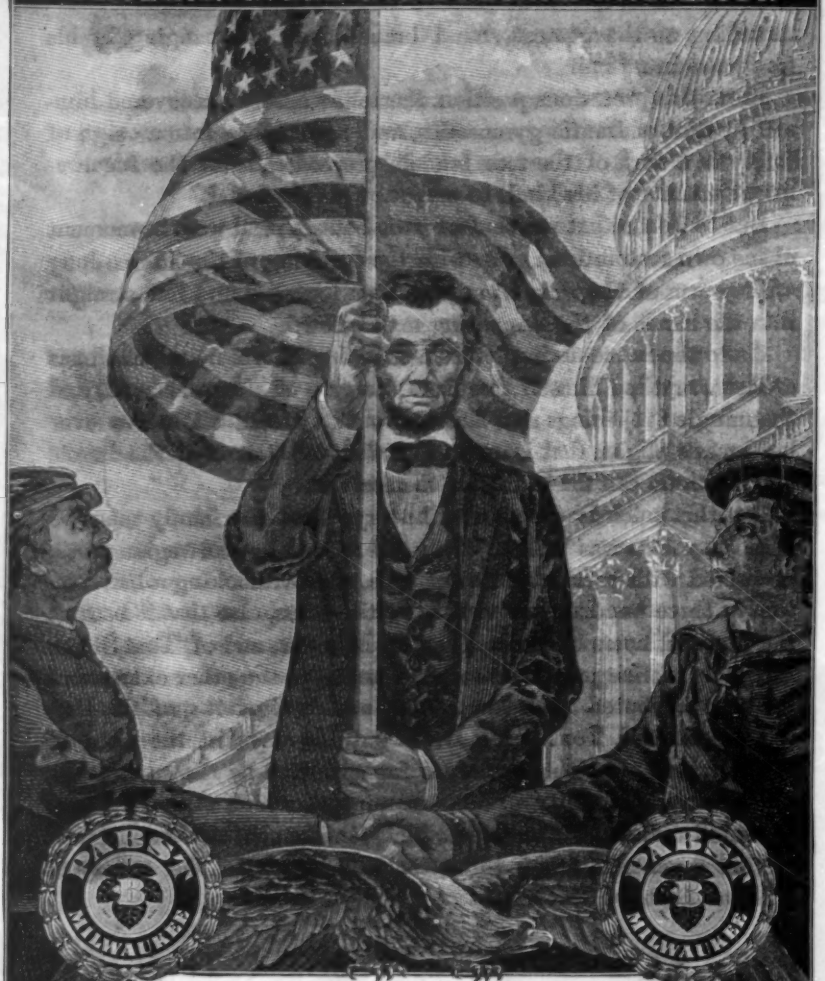
From this precarious position the feline acrobat recovered himself by dint of frantic gymnastics, and scrambling into a coign of safety in a fork of the tree branch, proceeded, after the inconsequent manner of his kind, to make a vigorous toilet.

But to Jonas that moment of Tom Satan's peril was the moment of his own restoration. For with the breaking of the limb a long withey arm of the grapevine had been loosened and fell straight into the hands of the despairing man below.

As to the nerve-taxing, muscle-straining efforts by which Jonas at last wrenched himself free from the grip of the quicksand, and the mingled rejoicings and lamentations of Elminta Minerva over her lover's plight, that is an outline that all lovers of the heroic and romantic can fill in to suit themselves.

But this much is a matter of history: that the family mansion of seven rooms was built on the knoll shaded by Norwegian pines, decorated with variegated flower beds, and overlooking a half section of three hundred and twenty fertile acres, also that it became the peaceful home of Jonas, Elminta Minerva, and of Tom Satan. For to his feline preserver Jonas, veering to the other extreme of feeling, attributed such courageous and benignant qualities that the regenerated Tom Satan lived out his days in the odor of sanctity, and after his death was immortalized by the erection, in his memory, of a lofty granite monument, which still stands on the knoll under the Norwegian pines, in the southwest quarter of section seventeen, range three, township three, in the county of Thomas, State of Kansas.

PERFECTION IN BREWING IS REACHED IN AMERICA.



A POWERFUL MENTALITY.

Strength of character is based upon mental power normally exerted. A calm mind, steady nerve, and rythmatic action of the intelligence are absolutely essential to health. A mind weakened by loss of sleep, over-exertion, anxieties, and the summer's heat can hardly hope for complete success. Nerve and energy may do much, but the strain is gradually sapping one's mental strength. Nothing will bring the mind back to its normal power, to steady action quicker than

PABST MALT EXTRACT,
THE "BEST" TONIC.

While it does this, it builds up the body so that it can better support the mind in its efforts. After the relaxation, fatigue, and ennui of the summer, nothing is better than **PABST MALT EXTRACT, The "Best" Tonic.**

"IN UNION IS STRENGTH"